

Briefing Note

To: Minister LeBlanc
From: Meredith
Date: February 8, 2022
Re: Political Note on Windsor blockade/protest & Sarnia

I spoke with Mayor Dilkin's Chief of Staff Andrew Teliszewsky this morning. I know Andrew personally and he is level-headed, a former Chief of Staff in the Ontario Liberal government pre-Ford. Jamie and I meet with the Mayor and Andrew back in October in Ottawa. This is Andrew's download:

Who are the protesters?

The blockade/protest is in the second day.

The "convoy" is mostly leaderless.

It is made up primarily of pickup trucks and farm vehicles, not truckers, a few big rigs but mostly they are collateral damage caught in blockade.

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Situation on the ground in Windsor:

- The Windsor Ambassador Bridge is temporarily closed to Canada-bound traffic, a small number of commercial trucks have been able to travel to the United States using local service streets.
- Northbound and southbound traffic on Huron Church continues to be blocked to traffic at this time. The Windsor Police had temporarily secured a "safe lane" for traffic to move both north and south bound on Huron Church (the roadway to access and egress from the bridge) for emergency vehicles only, but this is now closed again – no border traffic is able to use these lanes – the CBSA and US CBP has requested that Windsor Police allow border traffic to use the safe lane.
- As a result of diverting traffic to the Sarnia Blue Water Bridge, the border wait time is currently at 15 minutes for trucks entering Canada – all 7 commercial lanes are open – additional resources are being brought to Sarnia from other SOR POEs to assist with keeping all available lanes open. Protestors at Windsor have put out a call to Sarnia area protestors to close the highway near the Blue Water Bridge. SOR has engaged OPP to solicit their cooperation in maintaining order along Highway 402, the OPP advised that they cannot provide any assurances that the highway will remain open. See below for update on Sarnia: Protestors gathering on either side of the border.

Cities Concerns:

- They were concerned over the weekend about moving thousands of health care workers between Windsor and Detroit, but passenger Tunnel hasn't been affected too greatly yet going into the US.
- Ambassador bridge from Canada to US two roads available, but one not viable for trucks. Passenger cars can get to on-ramp but delayed significantly, a trickle can make across.

- City was concerned that blockade could have stranded emergency crews as N/S arterial blocked. Police have accessed one cross street to open.
 - City moved some Police, Fire and ambulance over night to opposite side of convoy to have emergency vehicles available, so they aren't cut off from part of the city as they don't presently have a functioning fire hall or EMS on other side of Huron, but it's manageable now.
- Stellantis (aka Chrysler) has called the Mayor, asking when going to be cleared, no one knows.
 - Currently going through Sarnia, causing a 4 hour delay.
- Hotel Du Grace health care, (not an urgent care centre) access is being affected.
- Residents ability to get to downtown or on highway is limited.
- Ability to get to school/work hampered for some.
- Overnight last night there was an attempted to occupy a high school on arterial road. Police attended and towed vehicles that were occupying parking lot.
 - There was a quick escalation, tire irons, etc., but deescalated by police quickly.
 - Looked at first like ripe for a "tinder box" for escalation, ultimately just played loud music and significant alcohol and drug use overnight.
 - Not a high density area like Ottawa, but some residential properties.

What steps has the City taken?

Windsor police are keeping protesters from tunnel.

Police report that criminal files have been opened on participants and tickets issued

Mayor feels right to protest but not okay to cut off single largest access bridge between Canada and US.

Mayor is considering inviting them to City Hall/ Provincial Court to get them away from bridge.

Calling for calm.

CNN and Michigan media are captivated, Mayor doing media throughout the day.

Mayor is back to back today until 6pm

Next Steps:

- City is receiving regular updates. Next briefing at 4:30 from Police, Fire, EMS. CBSA has a representative there.
 - Andrew will send the notes.
- Police intelligence suggest more protesters are coming.
- With no clear leader amongst the protest group it is very difficult for the Police to negotiate.
- Windsor police will step up public communication today in order to sway public opinion away from the protestors
- City is not attempting to remove the blockade as they do not have resources to do it.
- Province has called to see about sending OPP.
- MP Kusmierczyk asked mayor how we can be helpful.
- Police are pulling together request.

Reached out to MP Kusmierczyk to get his take:

"Last night I spoke with major auto manufacturers, parts producers and farmers and they are unequivocal that an extended blockade will shut down operations and cost jobs.

Our border community has gone through so much the last two years – and with the highest unemployment rate already, this latest crisis is a punch in the teeth just as we are clawing our way back.

Irrelevant

More Southwestern Disruption in Sarnia:

- At 10:59 ET on 08 February 2022, the Federal Bridge Corporation Limited (FBCL) reported two (2) separate groups of protesters appearing to mass on either side of the Canada-United States (border) with the intention of blocking and halting traffic on either side the Bluewater Bridge (BWB) in Sarnia, ON.
- The groups are reported aligned with the protesters blocking the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor, ON.
- It is unclear if this is the same group that protested on Highway 402 westbound on 06 February 2022. The intent of this group is reported to be to cause disruption to the border crossing.
- The group is reported to be bringing lawyers with them to “negotiate their terms” (i.e. food, toilets, etc.) If this protest follows a similar path to the one in Windsor, ON, it is expected that vehicles will be rerouting off of the highway and being to congest the village of Point Edward, ON.
- As of 12:32 ET traffic is significantly backed up for both east and westbound traffic at the BWB. Eastbound traffic (US) is backed up to Interstate 69 (I-69), while westbound (Canada) traffic is backed up to the Airport Road (Rd) exit on Highway 402 (westbound).

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